

9. (Amended) ~~A decoder~~ ~~An apparatus~~ comprising:
a frame disassembly and parameter decoding unit coupled to an excitation generator;
a synthesizing filter coupled to the excitation generator; and
an output scaling and filtering unit coupled to the synthesizing filter,
wherein the decodera-decoder; and
~~to decompress-~~ decompresses a plurality of compressed signals at variable frame rates based on a plurality of prioritized parameters to dynamically reduce signal bandwidth while preserving perceptual signal quality.

14. (Amended) A program storage device readable by a machine comprising instructions that cause the machine to:
receive a plurality of signals from a first transmission device;
encode the plurality of signals in a compressed format; and
transmit the plurality of signals in a compressed format through a transmission medium at variable frame rates based on a plurality of prioritized parameters to dynamically reduce signal bandwidth while preserving perceptual quality of the signals.

20. (Amended) A program storage device readable by a machine comprising instructions that cause the machine to:
receive the plurality of signals in a compressed format through a transmission medium at variable frame rates based on a plurality of prioritized parameters to dynamically reduce signal bandwidth while preserving perceptual quality of the signals;
decode the plurality of compressed signals; and
transmit the decoded signals to a first receiving device.

26. (Amended) A method comprising:
receiving a plurality of signals from a transmission device;
encoding the plurality of signals in a compressed format; and

transmitting the plurality of signals in a compressed format through a transmission medium at variable frame rates based on a plurality of prioritized parameters to dynamically reduce signal bandwidth while preserving perceptual quality of the signals.

33. (Amended) A method comprising:

receiving a plurality of signals in a compressed format through a transmission medium at variable frame rates based on a plurality of prioritized parameters to dynamically reduce signal bandwidth while preserving perceptual quality of the plurality of the signals;

decoding the plurality of compressed signals; and

transmitting the decoded signals to a receiving device.

40. (New) An apparatus comprising:

means for encoding a plurality of input signals at variable frame rates, the means for encoding including:

means for identifying input signal segments;

means for extracting a plurality of parameters describing signal segments; and

means for associating priority values to the plurality of parameters.

41. (New) The apparatus of claim 40, wherein the means for encoding comprises compressing the plurality of input signals at variable frame rates based on the plurality of prioritized parameters to dynamically reduce signal bandwidth while preserving perceptual signal quality.

42. (New) An apparatus comprising:

means for decoding a plurality of compressed signals;

the decoding means including:

means for reconstructing parameters from the plurality of compressed signals;

means for constructing an excitation signal;

means for producing a raw output signal; and

means for producing a final output signal.

43. (New) The apparatus of claim 42, wherein the means for decoding comprises decompressing the plurality of compressed signals at variable frame rates based on a plurality of prioritized parameters to dynamically reduce signal bandwidth while preserving perceptual signal quality.